



# **Pilot Scheme for Public Participation at Overview & Scrutiny Panel Meetings**

**The public participation scheme allows you to voice opinions, objections and ask questions at these meetings**

**16 August 2016 – 14 February 2017**

**Meetings start at 7.00 pm and held in the Council Chamber**

**May 2016**

## **Introduction**

This scheme will initially be on a trial basis between 16 August 2016 and 14 February 2017. At the end of the trial period Full Council will consider a report and decide whether to extend the trials to cover additional committees for another time limited period or discontinue the scheme.

## **Procedure Rules Explained**

You may speak at all meetings of the Overview & Scrutiny Panel and its sub committees, within the prescribed limits and as advised by the Chairman of the Panel. It should be noted that all other meeting procedure rules for conducting an orderly meeting apply.

## **Who can speak?**

Any member of the public can speak, provided they are present at the meeting when the Chairman of the meeting calls their names.

## **How much time will speakers be allowed?**

A total of six minutes will be allocated to public speaking for each item on the agenda with individuals limited to three minutes each. Only two people can speak on an item. The public speaking will occur immediately after the Chairman has moved to the relevant item and before the Panel starts to consider that item.

Time is limited, so we encourage the appointment of spokespersons to represent groups of people who wish to make similar points.

## **Can I speak on any matter?**

No. Speakers will be allowed to speak only on matters that appear on the Agenda of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel or any of its sub-committees in question, once such agendas are made public. No public speaking may take place on any confidential item exempted under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

## **What do I need to do if I decide I want to speak?**

If you want to address the Panel or any of its sub-committees, then please contact Democratic Services at least two clear working days before the meeting, i.e. if the

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meeting is on a Tuesday, requests to speak must be received in writing by 5.30 pm on the preceding Thursday.

**NB:** Where such a deadline date falls on a Friday, then the closing deadline time must be 5.00 pm.

When registering you will be asked for your consent to allow Democratic Services to share your details with others who request to speak after you. This allows those who are unsuccessful in registering to put their points of view to you, so you can raise them on their behalf if you feel they have merit. You are not obliged to do so if you disagree with the points of view expressed.

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You are not obliged to give your consent to sharing your details and your details will only be shared with others trying to register to speak.

### What happens at the meeting?

At the appropriate time, the Chairman will invite each person to make his or her comment. Please turn up fifteen minutes before the start of the meeting. Give your name and (if applicable) the group you are representing.

### How to get the most out of your time

You should try and prepare notes in advance you can refer to in order to ensure you cover all the important points you want to make. Also try and ensure you stick to the topic being discussed, if you stray off topic you may be asked by the chairman to focus on the issue being discussed.

### Other Rules

Avoid derogatory or defamatory statements. You must not discuss the conduct or capability of individual Council employees or Councillors. ~~human resources matters.~~ There is no legal protection for comment made at meetings. The Council reserves the right to not allow an individual to speak at a meeting if they have previously made derogatory or defamatory statements or have acted otherwise inappropriately when exercising their public speaking rights.

### How to Apply

Applications should be made in writing and provide the following information:

Name, Contact Telephone/Mobile Number;

Brief outline of your statement;

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Please send your statement to:

[committee@thanet.gov.uk](mailto:committee@thanet.gov.uk) or write to:

Democratic Services  
Thanet District Council  
Cecil Street  
P.O. Box 9  
Margate  
Kent  
CT9 1XZ

If you have any queries please contact Democratic Services on 01843 577186 or email [committee@thanet.gov.uk](mailto:committee@thanet.gov.uk)